



## MEMORANDUM

ED&HS

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8(D)

**TO:** Honorable Chairperson Barbara  
Carey-Shuler, Ed.D. and Members,  
Board of County Commissioners

**DATE:** October 15, 2003

**FROM:** George M. Burgess  
County Manager

**SUBJECT:** Report on the Detection and  
Prevention of Elderly Abuse  
and/or Neglect in Assisted Living  
Facilities within Miami-Dade  
County

### RECOMMENDATION

This report is pursuant to directives issued to Miami-Dade Housing Agency (MDHA) at the May 14, 2003 Economic Development and Human Services (EDHS) Committee meeting. The committee directed MDHA to provide proactive recommendations for the detection and prevention of elderly abuse and/or neglect in Assisted Living Facilities (ALF) throughout Miami-Dade County.

### BACKGROUND

Miami-Dade County has an estimated population of 2,289,683 and more than 500 Assisted Living Facilities (ALF). 13.3 percent of the County's population is comprised of persons 65 years or older. Currently, inspections of ALFs in Miami Dade-County are conducted by the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) an agency of the State of Florida. Although ALFs are subject to annual inspections, inspections are conducted approximately every 18 months. This lapse is the result of the limited number of inspectors assigned to perform these duties and the number of ALFs to be inspected.

Currently, ALFs are also subject to various annual site inspections conducted by a number of Miami-Dade County agencies for fire, health and environmental safety. To increase the number of inspections of ALFs to identify potential abusive situations, cases of neglect and instances of possible elderly exploitation, the County could take advantage of existing annual site inspections. By slightly broadening the scope of each respective annual inspection, the well being of residents in ALFs could undergo more frequent observations throughout the year and thereby identify inappropriate conditions. Because the frequency of these inspections would not be increased, no significant rise in cost is anticipated. During the course of these public safety inspections, existing county inspectors could observe the premises and the residents of ALFs during routine inspections in their respective disciplines.

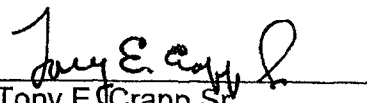
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SUMMARY

First, by broadening the role of County inspectors during routine inspections to include the observance of elder abuse, ALFs within Miami-Dade County would be subject to increased scrutiny for elderly abuse. Additionally, County inspectors should become active members of interdisciplinary teams of health care agencies concerned with elder abuse; become active at the community level in promoting the availability of services to the elderly and their caregiver(s); attend continuing education programs focused on identification, prevention, and treatment of elder abuse; and attend continuing education programs focused on identification, prevention, and treatment of elder abuse.

Second, MDHA recommends that the respective County departments develop a partnership with AHCA and the local Ombudsman Council (OC) an agency funded by the State of Florida Department of Elder Affairs. The OC consists of volunteer advocates who investigate complaints against ALFs and conduct unannounced inspections when responding to allegations of abuse, resident's rights, quality of life and administrative problems. These trained certified volunteers are appointed by the Governor and given authority under Florida law to investigate and resolve complaints involving ALFs.

Third, incidents of suspected elder abuse/neglect can be reported to the Florida Abuse Hotline by calling 1-800 ABUSE and residents can be informed of the various agencies available for resolving complaints.

  
Tony E. Crapp Sr.  
Assistant County Manager